(b) if so, whether any firm date has been fixed for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) There are at present no plans for a summit meeting between Prime Minister and the Sri Lankan President.

(b) Does not arise.

Issue of Visas to Israeli Davis Cup Players

407. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to issue visas to Israeli players so that Israel can play Davis Cub Lawn Tennis match against India in India;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) to (c) The venue for the Quarter Final of Davis Cup tie between India and Israel has not yet been decided.

Fighting between Sri Lankan Security Agencies and Tamil Militant Group

408. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 50 thousand people have fled from their homes and taken shelter in temples and churches in Sri Lanka's Northern Jaffna Peninsula following intensified fighting between the security forces and Tamil militant groups; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken in the light of the latest development in Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Government has received reports that thousands have been displaced as a result of recent events in the Jaffna Peninsula. It is, however, not possible to give an exact figure.

(b) Government has been closely monitoring developments in Sri Lanka. Government is also in touch with all parties on the need to bring fighting to an end and to resume negotiations for a political settlement.

Felling of forests

409. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:
SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
SHRI M. A. BABY:
SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:
SHRI K. MOHANAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased state:

(a) whether Government are aware of illegal felling of forests trees all over the country and especially in Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh;

(b) whether the cutting and smuggling of trees has been going on with the collusion of officials of the forest and Revenue Department;

(c) what is the estimated loss of trees as a result thereof during the last three years; and

(d) what action has been taken by the Central Government to stop illegal cutting of trees in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Government is aware of illegal felling of forest trees in the country.

(b) Whenever any collusion of forest or Revenue Department, staff in the illicit cutting and smuggling of trees comes to notice, the State and Union Territory Governments whose employees these staff are, take action against the erring staff.

(c) Figures of such damage are not maintained.

(d) Following guidlines have been issued to the State Governments/Union Territories for stopping illegal felling of forests:—

1. Checking illicit felling of trees and removal of forest produce.

2. Enforcement of the provision of the Indian Forest Act.

3. Providing deterrent punishment to the offenders.

4. Programme for Wasteland Development.

5. Strengthening of Forest Protection Forces.

6. Control of shifting cultivation.

7. Stricter control on functioning of saw and veneer mills.

8. Increase of protected areas like Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks.

9. Closure of vulnerable forest areas to grazing.

10. Promotion of use of alternative fuel to reduce pressure on forests on account of firewood extraction.

11. Substitution of wood in industries, railways and other user.

12. Elimination of contractors.

In addition, the Central Government has introduced a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of infrastructure, for protection of forests from biotic interference, under which funds are provided to the State Governments on a shared basis, to prevent illegal exploitation of forests.

Purchase of bullet-proof jackets for VIPs

410. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that bullet-proof jackets worth Rs. 1.4 crores are proposed to be purchased for security of VIPs;

(b) if so, what are the details of the foreign firms from which these bullet-proof jackets are proposed to be purchased and the amount of foreign exchange involved; and

(c) whether it has been ensured that the samples of the jackets to be imported have been thoroughly checked to avoid purchase of sub-standard material?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir. However, it is porposed to pur-